DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 093 CS 014 549

AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
TITLE Remedial Reading for University Students.
PUB DATE 2001-12-00
NOTE 10p.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; *College Students; Higher Education; *Reading Comprehension; *Reading Difficulties; *Remedial Instruction; *Student Needs; Teacher Role; *Word Recognition
IDENTIFIERS Reading Uses

ABSTRACT

The university curriculum leans heavily upon reading for a major way of learning in almost all academic disciplines, and problems with reading will hinder student achievement in the university. What should be done on the remedial level of instruction in reading so that the university student may proceed in working on degree requirements? First, the remedial reading instructor needs to determine where the student is presently in reading achievement. Once the remedial reading designate has determined a selected baseline as to where the student is in reading, he or she may ascertain the kinds of assistance necessary for the student to make more optimal and continuous progress in reading achievement. The student may reveal a necessity for word recognition skills. And beyond word identification, the student may have demonstrated a need for assistance in comprehending ideas. Diagnosis and remediation in university student reading should make for better readers. There are selected learning principles taken from educational psychology that the designated remedial reading instructor should aspire toward in working with students: there needs to be active engagement in learning by the student; the instructor must help the student accept reasons for becoming a better reader; the instructor's learning objectives need to be understood by the student; quality sequence must be in the offing in teaching university students to read at an acceptable level of achievement; and students need to appraise the self in achievement. (NKA)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 461 093

Remedial Reading for University Students.

by Marlow Ediger

CS 014 549

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

REMEDIAL READING FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

University students may not have achieved as much as possible in the high school and elementary years in reading. Thus, they are hindered in achieving more optimally due to a lack of reading skills when an increased amount of reading is required on the university level of instruction. In fact, the university curriculum leans heavily upon reading for a major way of learning in almost all academic disciplines.

it is difficult to say why university freshmen did not learn more in the area of reading achievement when attending public or private schools. When being a university supervisor of student teachers for thirty years in the public schools, the writer observed the following:

1. much wasting of instructional time by students while distracting others.
2. wandering around the classroom in an aimless manner; perhaps, many of these had Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).
3. treating others in a cruel manner. For example, a cooperating teacher told me to observe two boys when recess time came: one would threaten the other to tears immediately. This came to pass exactly the way the cooperating teacher had stated.
4. having "bad" days. One pupil just sat still at his desk and did nothing. The cooperating teacher said the student had four of these "bad" days in a week. The mother and sister were well aware of this, but could not be of any assistance to the pupil in changing behavior.
5. pouting much each day at his/her desk and refusing to complete assignments. The writer, when observing this pupil, thought of the song 'Santa Claus is Coming to Town' with the words "You better not pout, you better not cry, I'm telling you why, Santa Claus is coming to town."

To be sure, there are pupils who rebel at the school's curriculum, but there are also a plethora of pupils who truly put forth much effort to learn and are excellent learners. Also, there are teachers who truly attempt to provide conscientiously for each pupil with the best of learning opportunities in a classroom to no avail. Others may not be as successful in teaching in the classroom setting. Perhaps, the conditions under which selected teachers work is not conducive to pupil learning. Here. pupils come to school from low socio-economic areas and experience a troubled, unsafe home/community environment

(See Neuman and Bennett, 2001).

The above named factors will hinder pupil achievement as well as later success on the university level of instruction.

Where Does the University Begin in Teaching Reading?

There is, no doubt, that selected students have failed to read at an acceptable level for university course work who do possess abilities to complete requirements if they develop appropriate reading skills. A student may be able to hurdle problems in reading when he/she desires to do so and feels motivation to do university course work. The motivation may have been lacking previously, such as on the public/private school level.

What should be done on the remedial level of instruction in reading so that the university student may proceed in working on degree requirements? First, the university remedial reading instructor needs to determine where the student is presently in reading achievement. A standardized test with high validity and reliability may be used to ascertain the university student's present level of reading achievement. The test results need to be examined thoroughly due to the following factors:

1. the contents in measuring reading comprehension may not deal with what the university student will be reading in course work, especially that which will be purposeful to the learner. Thus, the content in academic course work may differ much from subject matter being tested on involving the standardized test.
2. the test results may not adequately pinpoint what the student lacks in reading proficiency, such as specific problems in word recognition or in selected kinds of thinking skills while reading.
3. the content read in the standardized test samples in reading do not view holistically subject matter to be read by students in university course work.
4. the standardized test measures items in isolation from each other since any previous test item(s) are not to give clues to the ensuing item being pursued.
5. additional procedures of evaluation need to be used to assist in determining the university student's present level of reading accomplishment (Ediger, 2000, Chapter Seven)

The writer would like to emphasize that the remedial reading instructor use a university level freshmen textbook, used in course work in the student's intended major to further assess

student achievement. For example, a student wishing to major in history may read aloud to the remedial reading instructor, in a complete atmosphere of respect and acceptance, a designated section of approximately 200 running words in world history. The university remedial reading designate diagnoses the kinds of errors made in reading such as the student failing to identify selected words, reading haltingly, not reading in thought units, substituting/omitting words while reading aloud, and not paying attention to punctuation marks. Noticing these kinds of errors provide a sound basis for the university remedial teacher to assist students in overcoming reading problems. Next, the remedial reading designate asks questions of the student to assess comprehension of subject matter read. The questions raised should not stress factual answers alone, but also critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving. Careful selection of questions needs to be emphasized here. Mundane and irrelevant questions need to be omitted. The potential university student may also tell in his/her own words that which was read orally to check comprehension in reading.

To measure an approximate acceptable level of reading, a student would need to identify correctly 90 per cnet of the words correctly as well as answer 75 per cnet of the comprehension questions correctly. If the above per cents of correct responses is much below 75 per cent correct for word recognition and 90 per cent for comprehension, then it is quite obvious that the student is not achieving at a rate needed to be a successful reader of university level content. It might be that a student performs better in reading physics, chemistry, mathematics, and humanities subject matter. Due to interest factors, the student may read at a higher achievement level therein, such as literature in the humanities, as compared to world history which the writer gave as an example. Interest considerations have always been a powerful factor in choosing what to read or in doing better in reading achievement.

Once the university remedial reading designate has determined a selected baseline as to where the student is in reading, he/she may then ascertain the kind(s) of assistance necessary for the student to make more optimal and continuous progress in reading achievement (See Gunning, 2000, Chapter Thirteen).

Proceeding with Providing Student Assistance in Reading

The university student needing help in reading instruction may reveal a necessity for word recognition skills. Thus,

assistance may be provided in using context clues. This is a necessity when the student can not identify unknown words in context. The student then must learn to place a word in context for the unknown which. The word chosen must make sense with the rest of the surrounding words. An additional guide to be used along with context clues, if a word cannot be recognized, is for the student to identify the beginning consonant sound of that unknown word. Thus the beginning consonant sound plus the contextual situation of the unknown word should provide what is needed to read fluently without a break in comprehension of ideas. Difficulties in recognizing words does indicate the university student will have a long road ahead in being able to read university level subject matter. Being able to recognize sequential words in reading is a basic in reading for comprehension. Defects in word identification can definitely hinder meaningful comprehension. It is complex enough for the student to comprehend ideas in reading let alone feeling inadequate in basic learnings in word recognition (See Afflerbach, 1990).

Beyond word identification, the university student may have demonstrated a need for assistance in comprehending ideas. This may be easier to work with for improvement in reading progress as compared to an earlier problem in word recognition skills. Should the university student be too far behind in word recognition skills and comprehension, it may be necessary for that person to take time off from taking initial course work and seek continual help, outside the university setting, in learning to read effectively.

Specific assistance may have been revealed through testing and/or other evaluation procedures in determining the reading level of the student as well as to indicate guidance necessary for the student to comprehend subject matter appropriately. From testing and evaluation results, the remedial reading teacher might help the student in the following areas:

1. reading for factual information. There are necessary facts which a student needs to glean from reading. These facts provide a foundation for developing more complex ideas. The relevant facts to be attained must be read meaningfully by the student. The important from the unimportant facts must be sorted out in reading comprehension.
2. reading to follow directions. What is implemented by the student from reading directions may be completed incorrectly due to not reading directions accurately.
3. reading for main ideas. Here, the student needs to determine the <u>overall</u> idea of a selection read. One sentence

given by the student should generally provide the main idea covering several pages. The designated remedial reading instructor should assist students to ascertain how many main ideas will be in any selection/story read. Teacher modeling an outline on the chalkboard or with computer use might well assist students to determine main ideas of subject matter read. Indicating subordinate ideas to bolster main ideas may then also be presented sequentially. Details to support subordinate ideas need further clarification.

4. reading to follow a sequence of ideas. There is a certain order of ideas or events in reading which need to be sequenced properly in order that the subject matter possesses clarity and meaning. Knowing the correct order in sentences of subject matter read provides understanding to the reader.

5. reading to determine cause and effect thinking. Historical events have causes, as well as chemical elements uniting or separating also have causes. Literature selections read will also emphasize cause and effect thinking. Thus, it is important for students to read for cause and effect relationships.

6. reading to assess the worth of ideas or subject matter. This kind of comprehension is very important in problem solving. Content appropriate for a solution to a problem is necessary with the rest of the subject matter read being irrelevant for problem solution.

7. reading to analyze such as separating facts from opinions. This type of reading is very important when reading an editorial or letter to the editor. The reader should desire to know what is objective thought such as factual materials as compared to what represents a personal opinion of he writer, in order to detect bias.

8. reading to obtain ideas for creative writing. Here, the student wishes to secure content to be used for writing a poem or a short play. The use of subject matter read will then stress novelty and originality of expressed thought.

9. reading to use information in performing a task. The content read has a practical application. For example, a reader may wish to assemble a model airplane. What is read then is to be used in a practical situation and that is to put together the parts to make a whole, such as in the entire airplane.

10. reading to evaluate a written product to assertion its quality. A rubric may be developed and used to emphasize quality and accuracy in its evaluation (See Winograd, 1994)

Diagnosis and remediation in university student reading should make for better readers. Those who can benefit from this

plan of teaching reading should go on to university study, as far as the student's abilities will permit. However, there may be a limit as to what a student can do reasonably well in university course work, after completing remedial studies. The designated instructor needs to assist students to achieve as well as possible in reading. Hopefully, the student will increasingly become a better reader.

The Psychology of Remedial Instruction

There are selected principles of learning taken from educational psychology that the designated university remedial reading instructor should aspire toward in working with students. First, there needs to be active engagement in learning by the student. The remedial reading instructor needs to think of strategies to use in teaching and learning situations. These strategies capture the attention of the student to achieve and learn to become a better reader. Second, the remedial reading instructor needs to help the student accept reasons for becoming a better reader. No, doubt, most of these university students in remedial reading realize the great need of becoming proficient in reading if they desire to pursue course work in the academics. It's either learning to read at a proficient level, or not being able to further degree opportunities in higher education. Third, what is learned as objectives of instructor needs to be understood by the student. Thus, knowledge and skills stressed need to be meaningful. It must make sense to the student in attempting to attain each objective. Fourth, quality sequence must be in the offing in teaching university students to read at an acceptable level of achievement. If the remedial instructor moves forward too rapidly, the student may not keep abreast of content and skills being stressed. If he/she moves forward too slowly in teaching, then time is wasted and a lack of optimal achievement my be forthcoming. Fifth, students need to appraise the self in achievement. The student needs to reflect upon what has been learned, as well as think indepth as to what is left to achieve in reading. Then too, the student must make a plan to realize the goals of what is left to learn (Ediger, 2001, Chapter Six).

It is important for the university remedial teacher to work individually as well as with groups of students who need assistance in improving reading skills. Students must feel awareness of the need to rely upon the self to become better readers. They must shoulder the responsibilities of increasing knowledge and skills in learning to read well.

Concluding Statements

There are selected questions which the student in remedial instruction needs to ask himself/herself. Among others, these include the following:

1. are my reading skills adequate to do course work on the university level?
2. will it be too frustrating in attempting to meet university degree requirements?
3. am I willing to give the time and effort necessary to receive a university degree?
4. have I considered other options than an academic degree from a university? There are a plethora of honorable ways of earning a living and contributing to society. Vocational interests should also be considered important.
5. have I taken a vocational interest and aptitude test in order to define my future?

The writer has experienced numerous students who were not permitted to take classes due to having a low grade point average. In fact, a few were taken out of his class in an interrupted manner with an announcement made by the Division Head. Right after class in the hallway, the writer was accused by these students of rigging it so that they could not continue academic work. It took much effort to explain to these students that he had nothing to do with those embarrassing moments of being taken out of class. One does feel sorry for these students. However, students do need to be cognizant about future vocational and professional plans. The day a student enters the public/private schools, much effort must be put forth to become a good reader and select a path of life which leads to success, confidence, and reward.

References

Afflerbach P. (1990), "The Influence of Prior Knowledge on Expert Reader's Main Idea Construction Strategies," Reading Research Quarterly, 25, 31-46.

Ediger, Marlow (2000), Teaching Reading Successfully. New Delhi, India: Discovery Publishing House, Chapter Seven.

Ediger, Marlow (2001), "Reading in the Social Studies," Teaching Social Studies Successfully. New Delhi, India: Discovery Publishing House, Chapter Six.

Gunning, Thomas G. (2000), Creating Literacy Instruction for All Children. Boston: Allyn nd Bacon, Chapter Thirteen.

Neuman, Michelle J., and John Bennet (2001), "Starting Strong: Policy Implications for Early Childhood Education and Care in the U. S." Phi Delta Kappan, 83 (3), 247.

Winograd, P., "Reading Assessment: Developing Alternative Assessments, Six Problems Worth Solving, The Reading Teacher, 447, 420- 423.